

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 1242

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BPRO, EFIN, IV

SUBJECT: DAVID MORSE VISIT TO IVORY COAST

1. FOUR MATTERS OF PARTICULAR INTEREST WERE DEALT WITH DURING HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL FIVE DAY VISIT HERE, FEB 12-17, OF DAVID MORSE, FORMER ILO HEAD AND NOW SENIOR PARTNER IN WASHINGTON LAW FIRM OF SURREY, KARASIK AND MORSE. HE WAS HERE AS GUEST OF IVORIAN GOVT AND WAS TWICE RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY.

(1) AS HIS LAW FIRM IS COUNSEL FOR INTERNATIONAL SYSTEMS AND CONTROL CORP (ISC), PARENT COMPANY OF LANG ENGINEERING, WHICH IS BUILDING DOLS 66 MILLION SUGAR COMPLEX AT FERKESSEDOUGOU, MORSE

WAS INTERESTED IN PROGRESS ON THIS PROJECT AND EXTENT OF IVORIAN SATISFACTION WITH LANG. HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH HOUPHOUET AND OTHERS WERE VERY ENCOURAGING ON THIS SCORE. LANG SEEMS TO HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE OF GOIC AND BARRING UNFORESEEN ACCIDENTS MILL SHOULD BE READY TO CRUSH CANE BY LATTER PART OF APRIL. ON HIS RETURN TO WASHINGTON FEB. 18 MORSE PLANS TO REPORT FULLY ON THIS SUBJECT TO WALTER SAUER OF EXIM BANK.

(2) PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET SHOWED CONCERN ABOUT LATEST POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TOGO AND EFFECT THEY MIGHT HAVE ON PROSPECT OF
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IBRD FINANCING OF PROPOSED TOGOLESE CEMENT PLANT IN WHICH IVORIANS

WOULD HAVE VERY SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST. HOUPHOUET WAS ANXIOUS TO ASSURE PRESIDENT MCNAMARA OF IBRD THROUGH MORSE THAT PROJECT REMAINED ALTOGETHER VIABLE DESPITE TOGOLESE STEPS TOWARD NATIONALI-

ZATION AND THAT GOIC WAS PREPARED TO GIVE BANK ANY REASSURANCES IT REQUIRED WITH REGARD TO ITS FINANCING OF PROJECT. MORSE PROMISED TO SPEAK TO MCNAMARA ALONG THESE LINES.

(3) PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET SEEMED VERY INTERESTED IN HAVING DAVID LILIENTHAL, NOW ASSOCIATED WITH ROCKEFELLER INTERESTS, MAKE UP-TO-DATE STUDY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOIC SHOULD PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON AGRICULTURE, WATER AND ENERGY, AND INDUSTRY. MORSE PLANS TO SPEAK WITH LILIENTHAL AND DAVID ROCKEFELLER ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF SUCH A STUDY.

(4) MORSE RAISED THE INTEREST OF ANOTHER CLIENT, THE ACCOUNTING FIRM OF ARTHUR ANDERSEN IN ESTABLISHING AN OFFICE IN ABIDJAN, ITS FIRST IN AFRICA. THIS PROSPECT WAS WELCOMED ENTHUSIASTICALLY BY THE IVORIANS (WHO FEEL THAT FRENCH ACCOUNTING PRACTICES ARE OUTDATED) AND ANDERSEN REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PARIS OFFICE WILL BE FOLLOWING UP IN THE NEAR FUTURE. ANDERSEN HAS BEEN THINKING MAINLY IN TERMS OF THE ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING SERVICES IT COULD PROVIDE TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR, BUT MORSE FOUND IVORIAN OFFICIALS EAGER TO HAVE ANDERSEN OVERHAUL THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN PRACTICES.

COMMENT: AN ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING SYSTEM SET UP FOR THE GOVERNMENT BY SUCH A WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN FIRM AS ANDERSEN WOULD PROVIDE A NEW FORM OF REASSURANCE FOR ANYONE CONCERNED ABOUT THE FISCAL PROBITY OF THE IVORIAN GOVT.
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